

THE PRACTICE OF CONVEYANCING

3

various Acts of Parliament were passed to try and simplify titles to property and shorten conveyances by omitting those clauses which were common to and appeared in all conveyances. In 1845 an Act was passed to render superfluous the insertion of "general words" and to provide very short forms of covenants and operative words in a conveyance. The Act was entirely ignored by Solicitors, who continued to carry on in the old sweet way. As a Solicitor's charges were in those days based on the length of the deed, instead of on a scale fee dependent on the consideration, it is not to be wondered at that Solicitors ignored what they looked upon as an attempt to cut down their costs.

Ultimately by the Conveyancing and Law of Property Act, 1881, substantial progress was made in the direction of simplification. Covenants for title in conveyances, mortgages, etc., were cut down to a few words; "general words" were omitted altogether except in special cases, and their effect "implied" by law, and many other covenants and declarations dealt with by references to the appropriate section of the Act, or were omitted altogether as being

implied. For several years this simplified conveyancing proved satisfactory, and it might have continued to this day had not a rival system of transferring land and houses intervened. This was the system now known as Land Registration.

Ordinary conveyancing was always admittedly imperfect. There was no method of proving without doubt that the vendor was the true owner of the property. The best proof possible was that he was in possession of the property (an old